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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 002297

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA DAS FISK, WHA/CCA, AND WHA/CEN
STATE FOR PRM, PRM/ENA, PRM/ECA, AND PRM/PRP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/13/2014

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [SMIG](#) [MARR](#) [CU](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAS GIVES TENTATIVE YES TO RESETTLEMENT OF PROTECTED CUBAN MIGRANTS FROM GUANTANAMO; NUMBERS TBD

REF: A. POPE/OLSEN E-MAILS/TELCONS/FAXES 10/8/04 AND

10/12/04

[1B](#). STATE 216668
[1C](#). TEGUCIGALPA 1524
[1D](#). STATE 139422

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Francisco Palmieri;
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶11.](#) (C) PolCouns and PolOff met October 8 with Foreign Minister Leonidas Rosa Bautista to follow-up on his September 15 meeting with WHA A/S Noriega and the Honduran Embassy in Washington's communications with the Department October 5 regarding the resettlement of protected Cuban migrants at Guantanamo Naval Base to Honduras (ref B). PolCouns reiterated that the USG will pay for the migrants transport and first six months of living expenses via IOM. PolCouns also indicated that Costa Rica planned to take 20 Cuban migrants. The FM replied that the GOH would take Cuban migrants and tentatively agreed that the GOH would take 21 migrants (the number of Cuban migrants needing resettlement that PolOffs were working with at the time of the meeting). The FM said they would likely be granted "economic refugee" status, which he thought would probably not entail any paperwork fees initially. Unfortunately, he said he did not think the migrants would have immediate work authorization as "economic refugees," but once the initial excitement of the Cubans' resettlement died down they could apply for residency and/or permission to work. This secondary paperwork would likely involve fees. He said that of course, the GOH agreed not to repatriate the migrants to Cuba.

[¶12.](#) (C) Rosa Bautista said that he had previously discussed the issue in general with President Ricardo Maduro who wants to accept the Cuban migrants. The FM said he would re-check with Maduro about the specific number of migrants the GOH was willing to accept. Embassy delivered to the FM at his house the biographic data for 16 Cuban migrants (ref A) the evening of October 8. The FM also said he would seek a meeting on October 11 or 12 to coordinate with the Minister of Government and Justice, Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, the details of any possible resettlement, as Minister Hernandez Alcerro oversees Honduran Immigration.

[¶13.](#) (C) Acting PolCouns spoke October 12 with MFA Director General for Foreign Affairs Mario Fortin about the GTMO Cubans, and faxed him a copy of the biographic data for 16 Cuban migrants, as well as the bio data for a 17th Cuban migrant (ref A). Acting PolCouns informed Fortin that the Embassy would provide bio data for an 18th Cuban migrant prior to the end of the week. Fortin said he had spoken to the FM October 11 regarding the issue and understood that the FM had held meetings at the presidential palace on the issue of the GTMO Cubans, but that he did not know the substance of those talks.

[¶14.](#) (C) As of the afternoon of October 13, Post was still waiting to hear back from the FM on the issue. Post will press the MFA for an answer October 14/15.
Pierce